
From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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For Immediate Release

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS OFFERED ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY FROM STATE

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz announced that registration has begun for her office's Address Confidentiality Program for victims of crimes such as domestic violence and sexual assault.

"Address confidentiality can help break the chain that allows abusers to reach their victims by tracking their address through public records," Bysiewicz said. "With address confidentiality, victims of abuse will not have to choose between personal safety and exercising their rights, such as voting. Victims of domestic violence and other crimes can limit danger in their lives and create a safer existence for themselves and their children."

To protect a victim's actual location, participants are assigned a post office box at the Secretary of State's Office and receive forwarded mail from the agency. An Address Confidentiality Program card is also issued and state and municipal government agencies are required to use the new address in all official records, including for freedom of information requests and voting purposes.

Over 41,000 victims of domestic violence were assisted by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence during the period July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003. "An Address Confidentiality Program offers victims of domestic violence a new option for safety from a life filled with terror," said Lisa Holden, CCADV Executive Director.

Bysiewicz partnered with legislators, women's rights and victim advocacy groups as well as law enforcement agencies to develop the program through a Connecticut Law Revision Commission study.

"We are very grateful that Secretary Bysiewicz has put this program together," said Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services Executive Director Gail Burns-Smith. "We believe address confidentiality provides protection for sexual assault victims that they so desperately need."

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services provided help to over 4,700 sexual assault victims during the 2002-03 fiscal year.

Other supporters of the Address Confidentiality Program include the Attorney General's Office, Office of Victim Services, Office of the Victim Advocate, Chief State's Attorney, Chief Public Defender, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund.

Address confidentiality programs are currently active in nine other states including California, Massachusetts and Vermont. Washington started the nation's first such program in 1991 and has since registered about 2000 participants.

For more information on the Secretary of the State's Address Confidentiality Program call the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence at (888) 774-2900, or Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services at (888) 999-5545. For information in Spanish call (888) 568-8332.

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